



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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LEFFLER PLANS STEPS TO HALT SALMON SNAGGING

Revision of Alaska fisheries regulations in 1958 to minimize the unsporting practice of salmon snagging--snatching these fish from Alaskan streams on their spawning run with only a series of bare treble hooks on the fishing lines--was promised today by Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife Ross Leffler.

"Present public concern in Alaska about the increased practice of this unsportsmanlike method near major population centers there is certainly justified and, frankly, I completely share that concern", said the Assistant Secretary.

"The conditions which accompany this operation, as they have been described to me, are certainly deplorable", he continued. "They must be terminated. In this day of steadily mounting public participation in outdoor recreation with more and more people fishing and hunting everywhere, conservation workers are placing increased emphasis on improving sportsmanship so the greatest possible enjoyment can be had from our fish and wildlife resources.

"The masses of people crowding streams or hunting coverts in many areas create a real public relations problem and only good sportsmanship can relieve it. The unpleasant byproducts of this snagging practice are a step backward rather than forward in conservation education."

Action to remove a prohibition against snagging which previously had been in effect was initiated in 1956 before Assistant Secretary Leffler assumed his office. The reason given was that the regulation then in effect had proved difficult to enforce because of the problem of distinguishing between bona fide sport fishing and intentional snagging. In place of it, a regulation limiting the take with hook and line to two fish was provided in some parts of Alaska.

The Acting Administrator for Alaska Commercial Fisheries, whose office is responsible for development of regulations for the taking of salmon, has announced that studies of this problem have been launched with particular attention to a review of the laws of three Pacific Coast States in this regard. From the studies will come the new measures in the 1958 regulations aimed at solution of the problem.

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